

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-10 AF-04 NSC-07 NSCE-00 L-02

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SCS-01 SCA-01 SSO-00

INRE-00 DRC-01 /062 W

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O R 131023Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9581

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LISBON 1885

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC VT CU PO

SUBJ: LUNT-PERALTA EXCHANGE

REF: LISBON 1879

SUMMARY: PORTUGUESE JUNTA MEMBER CHARGED WITH HANDLING PERALTA CASE CONFIRMS THAT GOP WILL NOT RELEASE PERALTA UNTIL ASSURED THAT LUNT WILL BE RELEASED SIMULTANEOUSLY. GOP PREFERS THAT CUBAN ASSURANCE BE OBTAINED THROUGH VATICAN CHANNELS. GOP DOES NOT SEEK FURTHER CONCESSIONS FROM CUBA BEYOND RELEASE LUNT AS CONDITION FOR PERALTA'S RELEASE. MOTIVATING FACTOR BEHIND GOP DECISION IS DESIRE MAKE FRIENDLY GESTURE TOWARD U.S. EMBASSY URGES PROMPT VATICAN ACTION TO OBTAIN RENEWED CUBAN COMMITMENT TO FREE LUNT UPON RELEASE PERALTA. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THREE-HOUR WIDE-RANGING CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF MORGAN AND DCM IN LATTER'S RESIDENCE, PORTUGUESE JUNTA MEMBER GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO RESPONDED TO DCM'S QUERY ON STATUS PERALTA CASE
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WITH DETAILED SUMMARY OF HOW CASE HAD BEEN DEALT

WITH IN JUNTA. A FEW DAYS AFTER COUP, PERALTA LAWYER MAUNEL PALMA CARLOS APPROACHED JUNTA ON MATTER AND WAS REFERRED TO GALVAO DE MELO, TO WHOM HE MADE PRESENTATION SEEKING PERALTA'S IMMEDIATE RELEASE ON GROUNDS AMNESTY GRANTED BY JUNTA FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS. SUBSEQUENTLY, CUBAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES ASTRAY ALSO APPROACHED GALVAO DE MELO ON MATTER, URGING PROMPT DECISION BE MADE BUT ON POLITICAL NOT JURIDICAL BASIS. GALVAO DE MELO REFERRED MATTER TO "POLITICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE" OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT FOR RECOMMENDATION. THAT RECOMMENDATION WAS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, A POSITION GALVAO DE MELO FAVORED AT THAT TIME SINCE HE DID NOT CONSIDER FOLLOWING ORDERS FROM MILITARY SUPERIORS TO FIGHT IN AFRICA MORE HEINOUS CRIME THAN SUBVERSIVE ACTS OF SABOTAGE IN PORTUGAL WHOSE PERPETRATORS HAD BEEN FREED UNDER AMNESTY.

2. AFTER FORWARDING RECOMMENDATION FOR RELEASE TO GENERAL SPINOLA, GALVAO DE MELO WAS SURPRISED TO HAVE RECOMMENDATION RETURNED BY SPINOLA DISAPPROVING RELEASE OF PERALTA FOR THE TIME BEING ON GROUNDS OF HIGHER INTERESTS OF THE STATE RELATED TO U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN MATTER (FROM TIMING IT APPEARS THAT BRIEFING BY FOREIGN MINISTRY SECRETARY GENERAL CALVET DE MAGALHAES, STIMULATED BY EMBASSY, HAD BEEN MADE TO SPINOLA WITH LITTLE TIME TO SPARE). ALTHOUGH GALVAO DE MELO WAS NOT THEN PRIVY TO DETAILS OF U.S. INTEREST, AND WAS SOMEWHAT MYSTIFIED, HE EXECUTED SPINOLA'S DECISION BY PUTTING STOP ORDER ON PROJECTED RELEASE OF PERALTA.

3. FOLLOWING ANOTHER SESSION WITH CUBAN CHARGE IN WHICH LATTER AGAIN URGED PROMPT RELEASE AS POLITICAL GESTURE TOWARDS CUBA, RESPONSE TO WHICH WAS THAT MATTER STILL AWAITS HIGHER DECISION, GALVAO DE MELO WAS DISCOMFITED BY APPROACH MAY 5 BY ATTORNEY PALMA CARLOS WHO WAVED PHOTO-COPY OF COURT ORDER HE HAD OBTAINED FROM MILITARY TRIBUNAL RENDERING JUDGEMENT THAT AMNESTY ORDER APPLIED TO PERALTA. CHECKING THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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WITH SPINOLA, GALVAO DE MELO WAS INFORMED THAT, WHILE JUNTA WISHED TO EXTENT POSSIBLE ABIDE BY ACCEPTED NORMS OF DEMOCRATIC JUDICIAL PROCEDURES, LATTER MUST BOW WHEN HIGHER INTERESTS OF NATION AT STAKE. GALVAO DE MELO INFORMED PALMA CARLOS THAT ORIGINAL OF COURT ORDER HAD NOT YET BEEN RECEIVED AND CONSIDERED BY JUNTA AND THAT MEANWHILE PERALTA WOULD NOT BE RELEASED. PALMA CARLOS REJOINDER WAS THAT JUNTA'S CONTINUED

DELAY ON CASE WAS CREATING GRAVE DOUBTS ABOUT JUNTA'S
DEDICATION TO DEMOCRACY, NOT ONLY IN PORTUGAL BUT
INTERNATIONALLY, MENTIONING SPECIFICALLY THE U.S.

4. ON MAY 8, CUBAN CHARGE CALLED AGAIN ON GALVAO DE
MELO IN STATE OF AGITATION TO INFORM HIM THAT ON THAT
VERY DAY, FOR FIRST TIME, AS RESULT OF CONTACT BETWEEN
AMERICAN ATTORNEY WAINWRIGHT AND PALMA CARLOS, HE HAD
LEARNED THAT U.S. WAS SEEKING ARRANGE EXCHANGE BETWEEN
PERALTA AND LUNT. GALVAO DE MELO, WHO FIRST LEARNED
OF LUNT SIDE TO STORY IN THIS CONVERSATION, RESPONDED
(TRUTHFULLY) THAT HE WAS NOT PRIVY TO ALL CONSIDERATIONS
IN CASE BUT THAT MATTER STILL AWAITED HIGHER DECISION.
HE SHARED CUBAN'S APPARENT SURPRISE THAT RELEASE OF
LUNT, EXTRANEIOUS TO CUBAN-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS, SHOULD
BE LINKED TO PERALTA AFFAIR, BUT ASSUMED THIS WAS
SOMEHOW RELATED TO ORIGINAL SPINOLA DECISION.
IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED TO HIM THAT WHAT SPINOLA
HAD IN MIND WAS TO ENSURE THAT PERALTA RELEASE RESULT
IN LUNT'S RELEASE IN ORDER THAT FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS
BETWEEN U.S. AND NEW PORTUGUESE REGIME WOULD BE
GENEROUS, FRIENDLY GESTURE BY PORTUGAL TOWARDS U.S.,
LEAVING LATTER IN NO DOUBT OF NEW REGIME'S ORIENTATION
AND SENTIMENTS. AT THIS POINT MILITARY GUARD ON
PERALTA IN RED CROSS HOSPITAL WAS INCREASED TO PREVENT
POSSIBILITY OF HIS ABDUCTION.

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 AF-04 NSC-07 NSCE-00 L-02 CIAE-00

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9582

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LISBON 1885

LIMDIS

5. DCM THEN PROVIDED FULL ACCOUNT OF CASE, COVERING VATICAN'S HUMANITARIAN INTEREST IN RELEASE OF LUNT AND INITIATIVE OF CUBA IN SUGGESTING EXCHANGE FOR PERALTA, CONFIRMED IN MARCH 1971 NOTE, AND SUBSEQUENT FRUITLESS EFFORTS OF EMBASSY TO OBTAIN GOP AGREEMENT. GALVAO DE MELO STATED THAT THIS WAS FIRST HE HAD HEARD OF VATICAN ROLE AND WRYLY EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF INTRANSIGENCE OF PREVIOUS GOP ON MATTER. HE WAS INDIGNANT OVER EFFORTS OF PALMA CARLOS AND CUBAN CHARGE TO PRESSURE HIM TO RELEASE PERALTA PRECIPITOUSLY WHEN THEY MUST HAVE KNOWN ABOUT LUNT CONNECTION AND WERE SEEKING TO PRESERVE LUNT AS BARGAINING CHIP FOR OTHER CUBAN USE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE HAD CONSIDERED POSSIBILITY OF SEEKING RELEASE BY PAIGC OF PORTUGUESE PRISONERS IN EXCHANGE FOR PERALTA, BUT THIS TACK NO LONGER BEING CONSIDERED, BOTH BECAUSE PAIGC HAD NO PORTUGUESE PRISONERS OF ANY IMPORTANCE AND BECAUSE PORTUGUESE REGIME WANTED ITS ACTION ON THE CASE TO BE INTERPRETED SOLELY AS GESTURE OF FRIENDSHIP TOWARDS U.S. HE SUGGESTED THAT GOP AND USG SHOULD GIVE THOUGHT TO MANNER OF HANDLING EXCHANGE, I.E., WHETHER QUIETLY OR WITH FULL PUBLICITY, AND URGED THAT VATICAN EFFORTS BE CONFIDENTIAL

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REDOUBLED TO SECURE CUBAN REAFFIRMATION OF COMMITMENT TO FREE LUNT UPON PERALTA'S RELEASE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: WE RECOMMEND THAT EFFORTS BE MADE URGENTLY TO HAVE INSTRUCTIONS SENT TO VATICAN REP IN HAVANA, WITH DISCRETIONARY CAVEAT REMOVED, TO SEEK CUBAN COMMITMENT FOR LUNT'S RELEASE. WHILE WE JUDGE THAT PORTUGUESE MAY BE PREPARED TO SEEK THAT COMMITMENT THEMSELVES, THEY PREFER AND IT WOULD OBVIOUSLY FACILITATE MATTERS FOR THEM IF COMMITMENT ARRANGED BY VATICAN. MOMENT IS EMINENTLY FAVORABLE HERE, BUT IN SUCH A FAST-MOVING SITUATION IT WOULD APPEAR PRUDENT NOT TO LET OUR ADVANTAGE BECOME ATTENUATED BY EVENTS. PALMA CARLOS AND CUBAN CHARGE ARE NOT LIKELY LET GRASS GROW UNDER THEIR FEET. AS TO MANNER OF RELEASE, WE RECOMMEND STRICT SECRECY TO EXTENT POSSIBLE UNTIL LUNT SAFELY IN U.S. AND THAT WE SUGGEST TO GOP THAT BOTH OUR AND THEIR INTERESTS BEST SERVED IF INFORMATION CONCERNING THE EXCHANGE BE COMMUNICATED DISCREETLY TO INFLUENTIAL CONGRESSIONAL QUARTERS, RATHER THAN BEING WIDELY PUBLICIZED.

COMMENT: ASIDE FROM LUNT-PERALTA CASE AS SUCH,
CONVERSATION PROVIDED INTERESTING INSIGHT INTO WORKINGS
OF JUNTA AND ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. PERHAPS MOST
INTERESTING IS EVIDENCE PROVIDED THAT SPINOLA IS,
INDEED, IN CHARGE, THAT HE CAN TURN DOWN RECOMMENDATIONS
FROM POLITICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF ARMED FORCES
MOVEMENT, WITHOUT EVEN GIVING DETAILED EXPLANATION
FOR DECISION, AND THAT OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS WILL
ENFORCE HIS DECISIONS AGAINST CONSIDERABLE PRESSURES
AND VIRTUALLY AGAINST THEIR OWN JUDGEMENT ONCE HE HAS
PRONOUNCED HIMSELF.
SCOTT

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